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BIKI UPDATE

Bikeshare program is on a roll

“Never going to be done making improvements,” the nonprofit’s CEO says

By Nina Wu
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In its first three months of operation, Bikeshare Hawaii reported that Biki, the first bikeshare program in Honolulu, logged more than 180,000 rides.

Lori McCarney, CEO of Bikeshare Hawaii, said she is pleased with the results of the first-quarter report.

“We want to serve residents and visitors. We want our bikes to be used,” said McCarney, “so I think the growth in users over the period is really what we’re pleased to see. It wasn’t just (that) people came out, tried it out and said, ‘OK, that was fun,’ and went away.”

Since it first launched June 28, Biki has logged 180,272 rides, with average rides per day increasing from 1,735 in July to 2,101 rides in September.

A total of 31,743 unique individuals checked out a Biki in its first three months, according to the report released in October. Of the total, 43 percent were members, meaning they signed up for a monthly pass rather than a single \$3.50 ride. The Free Spirit Pass, which offers a bank of 300 minutes for \$20, was the most popular option.

With \$2 million in state and city startup funds, Bikeshare Hawaii was launched as a nonprofit in June following years of preparation stemming from a feasibility study in 2014 that determined Honolulu could benefit from such a program. Bikeshare Hawaii has a

Please see BIKI, A8

Megan Fleury and her father, Keith Fleury, visitors from Ontario, used the Biki station at Monsarrat and Kanaina avenues last week. Keith Fleury said it is a great way to get around and see the sights.

DENNIS ODA / DODA@STARADVERTISER.COM



FIRST QUARTER BIKI STATISTICS*

> 180,272

Total rides

* Source: Bikeshare Hawaii
(As of Sept. 30)

> 31,743

Unique users
(43 percent members,
57 percent casual riders)

ON THE NET

Learn more at gobiki.org.

GOV. IGE PURSUES AIRBNB TAX DEAL

Some perceive an end run to avoid public scrutiny on a longtime controversy

By Allison Schaefer
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Gov. David Ige’s administration is pursuing a private tax agreement with Airbnb Inc. that would allow the vacation rental company to collect taxes from its hosts and send the money to the state.

Airbnb says collecting taxes from its hosts would generate more than \$30 million per year in additional state taxes.

“Ige is working with Airbnb and other online retailers of short-term rentals to negotiate voluntary collection agreements,” said Ige’s spokeswoman Cindy McMillan in an email. “Ultimately, the state wants to collect the taxes it is owed without encouraging illegal activity.”

Mike McCartney, Ige’s chief of staff, said privacy laws prevent the state from releasing details of the agreement, which must be signed off on by Ige and Airbnb before it takes effect. McCartney declined to say when that might happen.

The move, which has been quietly in play since the last legislative session ended, is garnering mixed reactions.

Some lawmakers and community members say they support efforts to bring additional money to state coffers by advancing an issue that stalemated twice legislatively.

Others see it as an end run that attempts to settle a controversial issue outside the public purview.

So far the document’s contents are unknown to all but Airbnb, the state Department of Taxation and Ige’s administration. The Honolulu Star-Advertiser filed a formal request for the document Monday.

McCartney said lawmakers were informed that Ige’s administration would attempt an administrative solution when the last legislative session closed without a tax collection bill.

Please see TAXES, A8

INSIDE

Air Force’s F-35A stealth attack planes stop in isles en route to Japan

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Mazie Hirono to receive immunotherapy in next phase of cancer fight

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HMSA and Kaiser raising Obamacare health plan premiums

BUSINESS / B5

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